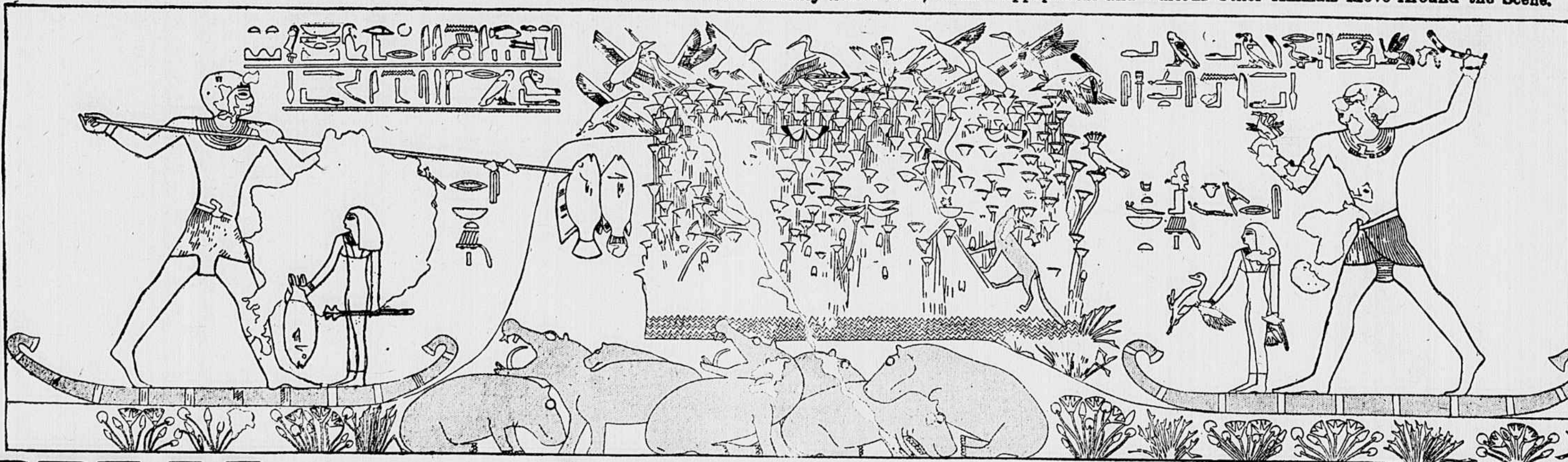


Prince Senbi Spearing Fish and Shooting Birds, Accompanied by His Honored but Remarkably Small Wife, While Hippopotami and Various Other Animals Move Around the Scene.

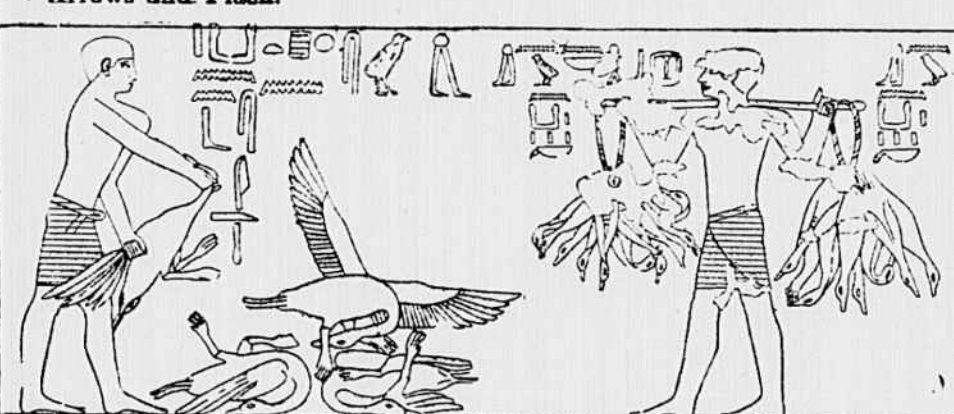


4000 YEARS AGO

Remarkable "Series" of Pictures Showing Just How Prince Senbi, the "Nomarch" of Cusae, Hunted, Fished and Behaved Toward His Relatively Insignificant Wife



Carrying His Highnesses Arrows and Flask.



Peasant Wringing the Necks of Herons for Prince Senbi.



Fisherman Wading in the Nile to Draw Out a Fine Netful of Fish.

of Egyptian life. The last scene in the banquet series on the bottom of this page shows servants, offering Senbi and his wife joints of meat. "A haunch for the Ka of Senbi the Justified" is written in front of the man with the great leg of beef. In front of the second offerer is written: "Offer unto the Ka of the Honored One, the Nomarch, Senbi the Justified!" The same text, except for slight variations in the attributes of Senbi, accompanies the third, fifth, sixth and seventh offerers. The fourth, who presents his master with four pin-tailed ducks, is made to say: "Bring offering for the Ka of Senbi the Justified!"

The wrestlers depicted on this page are part of a long series showing singers, dancers and others entertaining the prince after he has come home from the chase.

"The three vocalists squatting on the ground," says Professor Blackman, "in the attitude of their modern descendants, like them clap their hands in time to the

the struggling figures with a sense of life and motion. Like the modern Egyptians, who also at times indulge in this sport, each man taunts his opponent, their words being written above them. "By your leave," says one, as he gets his arm round his adversary's leg. "And now," he adds, "you will find yourself on your nose." Replies the other, "I'll make you do that. See! It's you who are coming a cropper." The words of the central pair are unfortunately almost entirely broken away.

"Don't talk so big," cries the man on top in the third group. "See, here we are. Now then, look out for yourself!" But his apparently falling opponent thinks that, after all, he will turn the tables on the all but victor. "Come, wretch," he cries, "I have wriggled round. (?) See! It is you who are yielding." Interesting details of life 4,000 years ago may be learned from the picture of the peasant, who breaks small with a hoe the heavy clods turned up by the ploughshare. He is followed by a sower with a basket full of seed-corn, which he scatters broadcast over the prepared ground. Behind the ploughman are two reapers cutting the corn with sickles, while farther to the right is one of the most beautiful reliefs in Senbi's chapel, that of the cattle treading out the grain. The kine are being driven round and round the circular threshing-floor by a man brandishing a twig and singing the while: "How fine are the bulls abiding in the barley till their last cornshock is trodden out!"

Between the threshing floor and the harvest field two men are engaged in winnowing the grain. One tosses it up with two flat wooden scoops, while the other sweeps it into a heap, as it falls, with two brushes made of twigs or straw. Both of them wear a handkerchief on their heads to protect them, as they bend over their work, from the fierce rays of the Summer sun, or to keep their hair clear of the flying chaff.

We can even learn from the frescoes something about the physical ailments from which people suffered 4,000 years ago. Such a detail may be learned from one of the pictures of a wild Beja or desert horseman leading young bulls. The face is destroyed, but the top of the mass of matted hair is still preserved. He is very emaciated. In addition to his long, scraggy neck and extraordinary hunched-up shoulders, the wretched man's legs are frightfully distorted, and he can just go shuffling and limping along with the help of his short but stout drover's stick. A doctor, discussing a similar mishapen herdsman on the north wall of the tomb-chapel of Senbi's son Ukh-hotp, points out that in the backward and unnatural bend of the left leg we have a case of genu recurvatum, a deformity resulting probably from a kick on the knee-joint.

On another part of the wall four peasants are bringing their master the produce of their labor in the swamps and fields. This consists of two herons, two bunches of waterfowl tied together by the feet and strung from a yoke, two cages of ducks, also suspended from a yoke, a tray of fruit and flowers and a small bunch of papyrus-plants.

"The birds hung from the yoke are most lifelike," comments Professor Blackman. "See how they thrust out their necks and peck at one another. One of them is quacking, as the open beak clearly indicates. This method of carrying live birds is practised by the fellahin at the present day. To the first three peasants are attached short descriptive labels. In front of the first we read, 'For thy Ka, the produce of the field; in front of the second, 'The produce of the chase for thy Ka,' and in front of the third, 'The produce of the field for thy Ka.'"

Professor Blackman gives this interesting account of the chapel from which these pictures are taken: "The tomb-chapel of Ukh-hotp's son, Senbi, is the northernmost of the decorated tomb-chapels belonging

to the twelfth dynasty monarchs. It consists of a single, almost square, rock-hewn chamber about 24 feet long and 24 feet broad. The height is about seven feet. The entrance to the chapel, judging from what is left of it, was quite plain. A portion of the face of the high desert slope, was cut back for a little over a yard. In the back wall of the shallow recess thus formed is the doorway, which is only a yard wide, the rest of the awl on either side of it forming the jambs. The surface of the jambs and their reveals has been smoothed, but the north and south walls of the recess are left rough and irregular. The threshold projects a few inches beyond the jambs, and is carried along their whole face. Against the threshold on the inner side is the groove for the wooden doorframe and the socket for the lower of the two pivots on which the door turned.

The most noteworthy architectural feature in this chapel is the approach or pathway to the shrine or statue-niche, which juts out from the west wall, and once, doubtless, contained a statue of the deceased Prince. This approach is somewhat wider than the doorway, and is sunk below the level of the rest of the floor of the chamber, which forms a wide and shallow mastaba or bench on either side of it. A little over a yard from the threshold the approach is raised some seven inches by two steps, and it finally terminates in front of the statue-niche in another and very shallow step, which is now much broken, like the lower part of the niche itself. The north, south and east walls of the chapel are adorned with painted reliefs in four registers, below which is a black dado surmounted with a border of blue, red and yellow lines. The background of the reliefs was painted a dark grey or indigo, from which the brightly colored figures and hieroglyphs must have stood out in bold, and pleasing contrast.

Professor Blackman in his report gives an interesting description of the long chain of cemeteries which form the necropolis of Cusae, in which these discoveries have been made. They lie west of the village of Meir, occupying not only the river desert, but also a considerable part of the steep, rocky slope which terminates in the high desert plateau. The tomb-chapels of the nomarchs are excavated half way up this slope, which in places is literally honeycombed with the burial pits of their wealthy retainers.

So far seventeen decorated tomb-chapels belonging to nomarchs of Cusae and their retainers have been discovered and cleared of debris—fifteen at Meir and two at Kuseir el-Amarna, a village on the east bank of the Nile, opposite Nazali Ganub. Of these, the two at Kuseir el-Amarna and nine at Meir belong to the period of the sixth dynasty, the remainder to the Middle Kingdom or twelfth dynasty.

In the scenes depicting sport in the marshes and pools the artists display an extraordinary appreciation for, and an ability to represent, natural life.

"Gaily plumaged birds hover above the thick tangled growth of reeds or wade in the shallows," comments the learned investigator. "In one corner of the scene monstrous hippopotami are depicted wallowing. In the deep water among the lotus-flowers swim numbers of fish with wondrous iridescent scales, and one of them has been seized and half swallowed by a crocodile. Combined with this almost flamboyant realism there are extraordinary mannerisms, particularly in the rendering of the male figures. All the men, except the Prince himself, who is normal and painted the usual red, have slender waists, very full busts, and are colored yellow like the women."

It is remarkable to note that in such a picture as that of Prince Senbi hunting with his wife, the artist shows a very good sense of perspective, a principle not generally recognized in Egyptian or very ancient art at all. The birds and other animals grow smaller according to their distance from the hunter.

Showing Meres, the Wife of Prince Senbi, Holding the Tire Scene Is Given Above on the Right.



Butchers Killing and Cutting Up Oxen, with Hieroglyphs Describing the Process.

Servants Offering a Leg of Beef and Other Food to the Prince Before They Are Cooked.